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PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1992-1997*

MAJOR PROGRAMME VI. REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Programme 32. Regional cooperation for development in Europe

1. The preparation, format and content of the medium-term plan and its revisions are governed by the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/PPBME Rules/1(1987)).

2. Regulation 3.11 provides, inter alia, that the medium-term plan shall be revised as necessary every two years to incorporate required programme changes and that the proposed revisions shall be as detailed as required to incorporate the programme implications of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the intergovernmental organs or international conferences since the adoption of the plan.

3. The revised programme 32, Regional cooperation for development in Europe, replaces the narrative of programme 32 of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, which was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 45/253 of 21 December 1990 and issued in document A/45/6/Rev.1. The revised programme has not had a final review by the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE).

4. The following text replaces the text of programme 32 contained in A/45/6/Rev.1.

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* After adoption by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, the complete revised medium-term plan will be issued in final printed form as Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/47/6/Rev.1).

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PROGRAMME 32. REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT IN EUROPE

A. Programme

1. General orientation

32.1 The legislative authority for the programme stems from Chapters IX and X of the Charter of the United Nations and from Economic and Social Council resolution 36 (IV) of 28 March 1947, whereby the Council established ECE and assigned to it responsibilities for coordination and promotion of international economic cooperation in Europe. The mandate of the programme is further elaborated in a number of General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions, as well as in Commission resolutions and decisions, the most recent and pertinent of which are Assembly resolutions 40/178, 43/219, 44/211, 45/199, 45/253 and 46/145; Council resolutions 1989/114, 1990/69 and 1990/83; and Commission decisions O (45), P (45) and A (46).

32.2 The programme is aimed at:

(a) Strengthening regional, subregional and interregional economic cooperation, particularly in priority areas, namely, environment, transport, statistics, trade facilitation (EDIFACT), and economic analysis in recognition of the need to re-evaluate its priorities from time to time in accordance with changed circumstances;

(b) Making full use of economic growth opportunities through the implementation of appropriate economic and social policies taking into account the relationship between the environment and economic activity, in particular the application of the guiding principle of sustainable development;

(c) Promoting the process of economic reforms in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and the integration of the economies in transition into the European and global economy.

To achieve these objectives emphasis is placed on close cooperation and coordination of ECE activities with other international organizations and institutions.

32.3 The programme of ECE, like that of the other regional commissions, has evolved in response to the various needs and priorities of member countries and changing economic and social conditions in the region and the world. Since many of the issues in the economic, social and environmental fields calling for concerted international action are essentially regional in nature, they can be dealt with most effectively at the regional level. In that context, ECE is called upon to play an increasingly active role in promoting regional and subregional initiatives, including assistance to the countries in transition and their integration into the European and global economy, in accordance with Commission decisions O (45) and B (46).

32.4 Over the years, the promotion of dialogue and cooperation between countries of the region with different economic systems was a major task of the Commission. Under radically changing conditions in the region, ECE continues to serve as the longest-standing permanent intergovernmental

multilateral body for the promotion of pan-European and transatlantic economic cooperation. Its membership comprises all countries of Europe as well as Canada, Israel and the United States of America. In keeping with this function, ECE has played an important role in the implementation of pertinent provisions of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), signed in 1975, and subsequent CSCE documents. The concluding documents of the Madrid and Vienna Follow-up Meetings, as well as the Paris Charter for a New Europe, adopted by the Heads of State and Governments of the CSCE at their summit meeting in Paris in November 1990, specifically recognized the work of ECE - both successfully accomplished or still in progress - and outlined new activities and provided new impetus for the work of the Commission.

32.5 Major economic processes taking place in and among ECE member countries will give rise to a reorientation and strengthening of cooperation in the region and certain subregions during the period 1992-1997 of the medium-term plan. Those include economic reforms in the Central and Eastern European States, as well as integration processes in EEC and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), as manifested by the proposed European Economic Area and association and free trade agreements with several countries in Central and Eastern Europe; and the United States-Canada Free Trade Agreement. Further emphasis will be added at the subregional level to cooperation among the Balkan countries, countries in Central Europe and in the Baltic and the Arctic regions, as well as in the Mediterranean.

32.6 The positive developments in cooperation within Europe and North America at both the regional and subregional levels indicate more vibrant economic relations in the 1990s. However, the share of ECE in global production and trade places a marked responsibility on the member countries and on ECE as an organization, particularly in the areas of environment and sustainable development, to promote cooperation between States and groups of States.

32.7 On the basis of its comprehensive and multisectoral programme of work, ECE has a particular potential for interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral approaches to complex problems, a potential that will prove to be of increasing significance given the growing number, urgency and complexity of problems that demand solutions involving more than one sector. The experience gained in the preparation of the Overall Economic Perspective to the Year 2000 and the interdisciplinary approach developed by ECE on sustainable development as a follow-up to the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development will serve as models for a wider application of such methods of work.

32.8 In terms of the sectoral approach, the Commission will, in accordance with decision O (45), give emphasis to its priority areas of work. The transformations in Central and Eastern Europe have added implications for all of the Commission's work, especially such practical issues as the development of transport and energy infrastructures; privatization, joint ventures and other forms of domestic and foreign investment; restructuring of state-owned industrial enterprises; and training. ECE will continue to serve as a forum for dialogue among its member countries on many critical issues, and also as a centre for data collection and for the dissemination of specific information in the region to all its members, as and when required.

2. Overall strategy

32.9 The programme will be implemented by the secretariat of ECE in close cooperation with its member States and with intergovernmental organizations. The secretariat will undertake independent economic research, analysis and studies of specific issues, provide substantive servicing of the intergovernmental mechanisms of the Commission and play an active role in the preparation of seminars, workshops and other events in member countries and for groups of countries, with a view to helping them cope with specific problems affecting them. In the framework of a global data policy, the secretariat will maintain links with national statistical offices and provide access to its data banks for various media, as well as disseminate information on specific issues to all interested parties.

32.10 ECE will continue to serve as a forum for the ongoing exchange of information and experience among governmental experts in all areas of its programme of work. This technical work provides the basis for the elaboration of medium- and long-term strategies and policy recommendations. Examples such as the Overall Economic Perspective to the Year 2000, regional strategies for waste management, environmental protection and the rational use of natural resources, a charter on groundwater management, long-term perspectives for human settlements development, timber trends and prospects to the year 2000 and beyond, and "Energy Efficiency 2000", could serve as stimulus for ECE to take up similar activities in other areas, including an all-European concept of transport, a European programme on the environment and the promotion of the linkages between environment and other sectors of activity for the realization of the principle of sustainable development.

32.11 ECE has already proved to be an appropriate framework for the elaboration and adoption of regional legal instruments, especially in the fields of transport and environment, some of which are increasingly applied beyond the ECE region. The experience gained will be applied to other areas where such regulations are in the interests of all ECE member countries.

32.12 ECE will strengthen its efforts to translate its work into concrete and practical measures and to disseminate the products of its work to all its member States and other interested parties, including other intergovernmental organizations. More efficient ways of communicating with and involving end-users and in particular the business community will be devised through common efforts by the member countries and the secretariat to derive the largest possible benefit from ECE activities.

32.13 The Commission will, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 45/190 and 46/150, Economic and Social Council resolutions 1990/50 and 1991/51 and its decision C (46) on international cooperation to address and mitigate the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, continue its work in the fields of timber, agriculture, human settlements, chemical industry, engineering industries and automation related to this subject, and consider other possible areas of work where it can contribute to the implementation of the Joint Plan of International Cooperation of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

32.14 In the course of implementation of the programme, the secretariat of ECE will cooperate with the other regional commissions, other United Nations

programmes and with subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. It will also cooperate and coordinate its activities with a number of specialized agencies, including FAO, IBRD, ILO, WHO and UNIDO, and with European institutions such as the Commission of the European Communities (CEC), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Council of Europe and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

3. Subprogramme structure and priorities

32.15 The programme on regional cooperation for development in Europe will consist of the following subprogrammes:

Subprogramme 1. Environment
Subprogramme 2. Transport
Subprogramme 3. Statistics
Subprogramme 4. Trade
Subprogramme 5. Economic development
Subprogramme 6. Energy
Subprogramme 7. Industrial development
Subprogramme 8. Science and technology
Subprogramme 9. Agriculture and timber
Subprogramme 10. Human settlements

32.16 Subprogrammes 1 to 3, together with trade facilitation under subprogramme 4 and economic analysis under subprogramme 5, have been designated as priority areas of work by Commission decision 0 (45). Activities in the other subprogrammes that are not identified as priorities are to take into account work in priority areas and to give special attention to needs of countries in transition and countries that are developing from an economic point of view, as well as the guiding principle of sustainable development.

B. Subprogrammes

SUBPROGRAMME 1. ENVIRONMENT

(a) Objectives

32.17 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolutions 42/186, 44/207, 44/226, 45/190 and 46/150; Economic and Social Council resolutions 1989/87, 1990/50 and 1991/51; and ECE decisions O (45), P (45), A (46), D (46) and E (46).

32.18 ECE regards environment as one of its priority areas of activity and acts as a forum for the elaboration of regional legal instruments in the field of environment and for relevant follow-up action.

32.19 The emission, transmission and deposition of sulphur compounds, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds and other major air pollutants and their effects on human health and the environment, including agriculture, forestry, aquatic and other natural ecosystems, pose major problems for the

countries of the region. International cooperation is essential in the formulation and implementation of strategies, policies and legal instruments for air pollution abatement, in the monitoring and evaluation of the long-range transmission and environmental effects of air pollutants and in the promotion of technologies and economic instruments for emission control.

32.20 Experience has shown that there is a strong interrelationship between the quality of the environment and economic activities, and that there is a need to define the natural resource base for sustainable development. In that respect, environmental impact assessment is an important planning tool. In the light of the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, it is necessary to elaborate a regional approach to sustainable development.

32.21 The recovery and reuse of residues from industrial production and consumption, including by-products and waste, is a policy option that offers an opportunity to economize resources as well as minimize environmental and human health impacts. There is an increasing need for the application of the cradle-to-grave approach to waste management, giving due attention to waste minimization at source through low- and non-waste technology. Mechanisms and procedures that provide for safe handling and transport of toxic or otherwise hazardous chemicals are growing in significance.

32.22 Water has become a key element in ecosystems management and socio-economic development as a consequence of increased urban densities, rapid industrial expansion, changing methods of agricultural exploitation, rising living standards and the growth of tourism. In coming years, member Governments will face a number of policy questions that call for joint international activities, in the form of cooperative programmes and agreements on action. Problems associated with the equitable utilization of transboundary waters, as well as prevention and control of transboundary pollution, will assume special importance.

32.23 The objectives of the subprogramme are:

(a) In the field of policy and management problems: to promote the elaboration, implementation and monitoring of effective environmental strategies and policies, including the concept of sustainable development, the integration of environment and economics at both the national and international levels, and the incorporation of environmental considerations into planning and decision-making procedures, including the application of environmental impact assessment, particularly in a transboundary context, and the prevention and control of transboundary effects of industrial accidents;

(b) In the field of air pollution problems: to strengthen cooperation in limiting, gradually reducing and preventing air pollution, including long-range transboundary air pollution, through the implementation of strategies and policies for air pollution abatement; to monitor and evaluate the long-range transmission of air pollutants and the effects of major air pollutants on human health and the environment; and to promote international cooperation in the field of emission-control technologies and economic aspects of emission control;

(c) In the field of resource and waste problems: to strengthen

cooperation in reducing environmental problems associated with production and consumption processes to promote the implementation of the Declaration on Low- and Non-waste Technology and Reutilization and Recycling of Wastes; to promote environmentally sound products as well as recycling of industrial waste; to advance integrated waste management at both the national and international levels; to promote policies reducing the risks of industrial accidents, including the elaboration of appropriate legal instruments; and promotion of regional cooperation regarding environmentally sound management of chemicals;

(d) In the field of water problems: to promote the coherent development, integrated management and rational utilization of water resources and their protection against pollution. This objective includes legal, administrative, socio-economic, environmental and technical aspects at the river-basin, national and international levels in the ECE region, with special emphasis on cooperation in the field of transboundary waters.

(b) Course of action of the secretariat

32.24 The secretariat will assist the Commission in the promotion and strengthening of cooperation among ECE Governments in the field of environmental protection, sustainable development and rational use of natural resources, and elaboration of regional legal instruments in the field of environment; in particular regarding long-range transboundary air pollution; protection and use of transboundary water courses and international lakes; transboundary effects of industrial accidents; and environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context. The secretariat will undertake research and analysis on issues on the regional environment and will monitor and evaluate the promotion of regional cooperation in specific environmental fields and will review the performance of individual countries in meeting domestic environmental policy objectives and regional commitments.

32.25 The secretariat will service possible follow-up activities in the framework of international conventions both in effect and under negotiation under the auspices of ECE. It will continue to service regular meetings of relevant subsidiary bodies and play an active role in the preparation of seminars and other meetings, including workshops in different subregions, in particular in countries in transition, on environmental issues aimed at disseminating the findings of the research and analyses. It will examine ways of translating those findings into intergovernmental and governmental policies and measures.

SUBPROGRAMME 2. TRANSPORT

(a) Objectives

32.26 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolution 42/186; Economic and Social Council resolutions 1989/104 and 1991/74; and ECE decisions O (45), P (45), A (46), E (46) and F (46).

32.27 ECE regards transport as one of its priority areas of activity and attaches great importance to the harmonization of standards and regulations on the construction of vehicles, the transport of dangerous goods, road traffic safety and customs requirements, the development of coherent transport infrastructure and combined transport.

32.28 Economic growth and wealth depend to an increasing extent on the exchange of goods and services between countries and the establishment of an international division of labour. It is a fact that production growth, trade and transport are closely interrelated. It is, however, in many respects a complex relationship, since transport, while being an essential supporting element of trade, also contributes to the generation of economic activities and exchanges. Transport has considerable impact on the environment, which needs to be closely examined within the context of the further liberalization of trade.

32.29 In view of the close relationship between transport and the overall socio-economic framework, it is evident that any modification in one of the two areas has an impact on the other. In this connection, the important economic developments currently under way in Europe, namely, the completion of a single market within EEC, the establishment of a European Economic Area between EEC and EFTA as well as the transition process of Central and Eastern European countries to a market economy, will influence considerably the transport sector. New logistics approaches and the increasing concern over the environment have an impact on transport.

32.30 The establishment of a single market within EEC will involve the abolition of frontier controls of goods, the freedom of movement and settlement of people, and the harmonization of technical and administrative standards. All these developments will lead to the increase in transport volumes. The creation of a European Economic Area will intensify this trend. In Central and Eastern Europe, the transition from a centrally planned system to market economy principles will encourage the use of road transport.

32.31 The structure of trade in goods and services is also changing. In relative terms, goods in bulk are declining while intermediate manufactures are on the increase. Consignments of goods to be transported are becoming smaller. The value of goods per unit of mass or volume is becoming increasingly high. Industrial organization is improving and becoming more demanding in terms of logistical improvements (for example, just-in-time transport), the tendency being to integrate transport into the process of production and distribution. These new developments also lead to a higher utilization of road transport.

32.32 International concerted action at the regional level is required, on the one hand, to plan and develop the necessary international transport infrastructure and, on the other, to provide adequate administrative support to facilitate the movement of goods and passengers across frontiers. Particular emphasis must therefore be laid at the intergovernmental level on the preparation of harmonized standards and technical requirements for all types of transport infrastructure and equipment, especially for combined transport, and on the development and introduction of electronic data processing at the international level to facilitate international transport management and administrative procedures.

32.33 Transport affects the environment because of noise, air and water pollution and the use of land. In some countries, the impact of transport operations, in particular road transport, on the environment has reached levels that are no longer acceptable. Growing awareness of environmental concerns will increasingly influence national transport policies in the years

ahead and will require that adequate measures be taken. Whereas the integration and transition processes lead to growth in road transport, environmental considerations become increasingly important, suggesting alternative solutions to purely road transport in favour of combined transport and other alternate transport modes.

32.34 Information on transport flows and trends along important European transport corridors, together with reliable and internationally comparable data on the structure and performance of the transport sector, needs to be compiled, analysed and disseminated on a regular basis, as such information is an indispensable tool for policy decisions in that area. Region-wide regular consultations and exchange of information among Governments are indispensable factors of cooperation in this field.

32.35 The development of new technologies, particularly in electronics and telecommunications, will open new possibilities for improving the efficiency of transport and communications; it will, however, create new problems in relation to the standardization of equipment and the safety of transport and communications operations.

32.36 The objectives of the subprogramme are:

(a) To strengthen cooperation among Governments in formulating and implementing a coordinated, homogenous and environmentally sound transport, communications and tourism concept, particularly with regard to infrastructure planning aimed at an efficient integrated European transport system, including promotion of action-oriented projects in that respect; to promote international cooperation in developing strategies for sustainable transport;

(b) To promote the development of an internationally reliable database on transport flows and to promote the dissemination of data and information relevant for policy makers and transport, communications and tourism industries;

(c) To elaborate and promote harmonized technical regulations and standards in areas such as construction of motor vehicles, traffic safety and transport of dangerous goods;

(d) To update existing international instruments and to prepare new ones in line with the rapid evolution of transport in the region. That objective includes public and private law aspects and covers technical as well as customs and other administrative documentation and procedures concerning road, rail and inland water transport.

(b) Course of action of the secretariat

32.37 The secretariat of ECE will carry out research and analysis concerning the current and expected evolution of international traffic flows aimed at assessing the demand for transport services and particularly the infrastructure needs. It will review and evaluate trends and developments in specific transport areas and prepare studies and promote activities aimed at improving transport safety and road traffic safety.

32.38 The secretariat will assist ECE and other intergovernmental bodies in

formulating comprehensive strategies aimed at the development of coherent, environmentally sound and efficient transport, communications and tourism systems in the region.

32.39 The secretariat will continue to administer a large number of legal instruments, regulations and recommendations, some of which are applied worldwide, concerning the organization and management of international transport, communications and tourism, and will, according to needs, contribute to the elaboration of new legal instruments in the light of identified needs.

32.40 The secretariat will maintain and strengthen contacts with other regional commissions to ensure consistency of transport policies with environmental goals and requirements on a worldwide basis and to make available existing expertise and experience in this field to other regions and interested intergovernmental bodies.

32.41 The secretariat will continue to service regular meetings of relevant intergovernmental bodies, and will play an active role in the preparation of seminars, symposia and workshops on practical issues of immediate concern. It will provide assistance to a number of administrative bodies established under various international instruments and disseminate the results achieved through those activities in order to encourage the implementation of common transport policies and measures. It will continue to support and promote operational projects such as the Trans-European North-South Motorway and Trans-European Railway in order to assist participating countries in their development to achieve a harmonized and coherent European transport network, as well as interregional projects. It will assist in the collection, compilation and distribution, in particular through meetings, seminars and symposia, of statistical and other information concerning international transport, communications and tourism.

SUBPROGRAMME 3. STATISTICS

(a) Objectives

32.42 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from Economic and Social Council resolution 1989/3 and ECE decisions O (45), P (45) and A (46).

32.43 ECE regards statistical activities as a priority area of activity and attaches great importance to the central role of the Conference of European Statisticians as an institution that includes national statistical offices of all countries in the region, in the framework of the mechanisms of cooperation among international and supranational organizations active in the field of statistics.

32.44 The subprogramme addresses the problem of conceptual and methodological development of statistical services of the region to better meet the need for timely, consistent and comparable statistics for monitoring, analysis and policy design in economic, social, demographic and environmental fields, for facilitating the integration of economies in transition into the European and global economy, and for fostering international economic cooperation. The problems facing statistical services of the countries in transition from

centrally planned to market economy-type management will require particular attention, as will the problems of statistical services related to integration processes and other processes of cooperation.

32.45 The objectives of the subprogramme are:

(a) To adapt and/or to develop, in close cooperation with the United Nations Statistical Commission, OECD, Eurostat and relevant specialized agencies, international statistical standard recommendations so that they meet the conditions and needs of countries in transition, and reflect ongoing integration processes in the region, focusing on priority fields of economic statistics and selected fields of social and demographic statistics;

(b) To develop further the conceptual basis for the accelerated introduction of environment and natural resource statistics into national practices;

(c) To foster the development and implementation of up-to-date statistical information technology and to contribute to the development of electronic data interchange in statistics;

(d) To provide improved and strong statistical support for the Commission's priority areas of environment, transport, trade facilitation and economic analysis;

(e) To strengthen the coordination of all statistical activities of international institutions active in the region, and the coordination of statistical programmes and activities of ECE so as to avoid duplication of effort and to better utilize available resources;

(f) To develop suitable instruments aimed at the reduction of response burden for member countries, while improving international comparability of statistics published in key areas;

(g) To provide a forum for the exchange of experience among member Governments on all matters relating to the organization and operation of statistical services.

(b) Course of action of the secretariat

32.46 In view of those objectives, the secretariat will:

(a) Plan, organize and service the meetings convened by the Conference of European Statisticians dealing with statistical problems and issues of concern to all countries in the region, and thereby to provide input to the work of the United Nations Statistical Commission at the global level;

(b) Assist countries in transition in developing national statistical programmes in fields such as national accounts, price statistics, agricultural statistics, foreign trade statistics, monetary and government finance statistics, statistical information technology, labour statistics and the development of business registers, in particular through acting as a clearing-house and promoting specific projects in the context of the subprogramme;

(c) Compile and process data for the Commission's priority areas of environment, transport, trade facilitation and economic analysis, provide stronger statistical support for these areas and further develop the ECE statistical database, primarily as regards the countries in transition;

(d) Contribute to the improvement of coordination of international statistical cooperation through mechanisms such as the ACC Subcommittee on Statistics, inter-secretariat working groups and other efficient forms of statistical cooperation, and to enhance the ongoing tripartite cooperation between ECE, EEC (Eurostat) and OECD;

(e) Continue the compilation and publication of internationally comparable, timely and consistent statistical data and evaluate periodically, with the assistance of member States, the utility and impact of the ECE's statistical publications, with the aim of formulating recommendations concerning the improvement of the format, substance and arrangements for distribution of publications of high interest and the discontinuation of publications of low interest.

SUBPROGRAMME 4. TRADE

(a) Objectives

32.47 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolutions 44/205 and 44/218; Economic and Social Council resolutions 1988/61, 1988/68, 1989/118 and 1991/76; and ECE decisions 0 (45), P (45) and A (46).

32.48 ECE regards trade facilitation as a priority area of activity and attaches particular importance to the development of the United Nations Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport (UN/EDIFACT), which will permit unprecedented increases in efficiency and financial savings in the conduct of international trade.

32.49 Trade facilitation consists of the simplification, rationalization and, where possible, standardization of those governmental and institutional procedures, formalities and requirements that place financial and economic burdens on the free flow of goods and transport. Information accompanying goods in international trade, or that related to their payment, has to be transferred between a number of parties, traditionally on a number of different paper documents. Cumbersome formalities and procedures constitute a major impediment to trade, but can be eliminated or greatly reduced through harmonization of standards. UN/EDIFACT, developed and maintained within the framework of the ECE Working Party on the Facilitation of International Trade Procedures, provides necessary standards to ensure worldwide harmonization in trade information interchange. Constant cooperation is maintained with national and international institutions engaged in such activities.

32.50 The economic interdependence of ECE countries, the economic and foreign trade reforms being introduced in the Central and Eastern European States and the development of the subregional integration process make it necessary to undertake periodic exchanges of information on trade trends, policies and problems and on changing forms of economic cooperation (such as joint ventures, promotion of foreign investment, privatization, training) in the

region. The transition process of Central and Eastern European countries to market economies requires radical changes in their foreign trade systems and patterns. Member countries that are developing from the economic point of view encounter special trade difficulties and are not as well equipped as other countries of the region to solve them.

32.51 The development and exchange of transparent market information and experience, including marketing, investment, privatization, financing techniques and improved business contacts, constitute important means for promoting intraregional trade.

32.52 The objectives of the subprogramme are:

(a) In the area of trade facilitation: to reach and accelerate agreements on basic international standards for the facilitation of interchange of trade data and messages principally by means of electronic data interchange; and to develop, monitor and promote UN/EDIFACT, including an interregional project on cooperation in this area within the framework of the Working Party on Facilitation of International Trade Procedures;

(b) In the area of trade policy: to assist the European countries in transition to a market economy to elaborate measures aimed at creating favourable conditions for intraregional trade expansion and structural diversification;

(c) In the area of trade promotion: to create favourable conditions for industrial cooperation between countries in the ECE region; to promote conditions for a greater participation of small and medium-sized enterprises in intraregional trade.

(b) Course of action of the secretariat

32.53 In the area of facilitation of international trade procedures, new recommendations will be prepared for adoption; UN/EDIFACT will continue to be developed, monitored and promoted and its directories will be updated and disseminated regularly; Trade Facilitation News will continue to be issued. An interregional cooperation project in the area of trade facilitation will be implemented, including development of the training component of the project applicable to ECE economies in transition as well as to other ECE member countries where international facilitation of trade procedures is still at an early stage.

32.54 The secretariat will undertake periodic reviews and analyses of regional and interregional trade trends and issues and continue to publish new studies on changes in trade policies, development finance, foreign investment, privatization, compensation trade and trade in services, in cooperation with other intergovernmental organizations. Particular attention will be paid to specific problems encountered by small and medium-sized enterprises, member countries in transition and those which are developing from the economic point of view. The secretariat will also contribute to the preparation of seminars and workshops on these subjects.

32.55 The secretariat will continue the dissemination of materials of assistance to Governments and to business circles. Surveys and studies will

be undertaken on new forms of investment ventures and industrial cooperation. The quarterly bulletin entitled East-West Joint Ventures and Investment News will continue to be published. New guides on contract practices in international commercial transactions will be elaborated.

SUBPROGRAMME 5. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

(a) Objectives

32.56 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolutions 39/228, 40/178, 42/186, 44/77, 44/169, 44/210, 44/211 and 46/145; Economic and Social Council resolutions 1989/91, 1989/93, 1989/105 and 1989/114; and ECE decisions D (45), O (45), P (45), A (46) and B (46).

32.57 ECE regards economic analysis as an area of priority within its mandate, as an instrument for strengthening economic relations and multilateral cooperation between countries of the ECE region and with other regions of the world.

32.58 The subprogramme addresses issues of socio-economic development with long gestation periods, requiring a coherent macroeconomic framework for groups of countries and the region as a whole. During the period 1992-1997 of the medium-term plan, the region will continue to experience profound changes. Several countries, previously grouped as centrally planned economies, will proceed with their transition to a market economy, implying further alteration of their economic, social and political systems. In doing so, they will have to address tremendous internal and external imbalances accumulated over decades and to initiate the process of comprehensive institutional, technical and economic reconstruction. Changes in these countries have significant implications for other countries in the region and for global economic and political developments at large. Other countries will proceed with their domestic adjustment policies, while economic integration in the region will enter a new era, with a significant impact on countries in and outside of the region. The complexity of national problems and the growing interdependence of the economies of the region make international cooperation in designing and implementing national economic policies more important than ever.

32.59 In matters concerning population (including its social aspects) the issues include an upsurge in unemployment in the countries in transition coupled with high and rising long-term unemployment in the developed market economies; the ageing of the population and its implications for pension schemes and health insurance; and a wide range of questions related to the economic role of women in the region. As a consequence of the recent and continuing changes in Central and Eastern Europe, the problem of international migration is likely to become more acute.

32.60 The objectives of the subprogramme are:

(a) To promote the process of economic reform and the integration of the economies in transition within the European and global economy by paying special attention to the interests of member countries that are developing from an economic point of view and by increasing the observation, the identification and the analysis of the process of development of economies in Central and Eastern Europe;

(b) To provide member Governments with international perspectives on current economic and demographic issues so that they have a broader framework in which to approach national and international problems;

(c) To promote an integrated approach by members of the Commission to demographic and related socio-economic policies and programmes of national and international relevance and concern.

(b) Course of action of the secretariat

32.61 In order to achieve the above objectives, the secretariat will systematically monitor and analyse current economic developments in the region, with emphasis on those in the countries in transition, the process of economic integration in the region and the process of economic transformation in Central and Eastern Europe. The secretariat will provide the Commission and its subsidiary bodies with background analysis of these developments. In reviewing the progress in overcoming the problems of the transition to a market economy in the Central and Eastern European countries, the secretariat will indicate, whenever possible, potential problems encountered. The secretariat will work in close cooperation with EEC and with other international institutions dealing with similar issues of economic research and analysis, including IMF, IBRD, EBRD, GATT and, in particular, OECD, in order to avoid duplication of effort and respectively to capitalize on those areas in which each organization has special competence.

32.62 The secretariat will continue its work on demographic trends, population structure and the integration of population factors into economic analysis and policies.

32.63 The secretariat will attach particular importance to the dissemination of the results of its analysis in its regular and occasional publications and also, whenever possible, by means of such practical activities as round tables, conferences, seminars and workshops. In addition, attempts will be made to expand the secretariat's databases and to improve access to them for member countries and international organizations.

SUBPROGRAMME 6. ENERGY

(a) Objectives

32.64 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolutions 42/186 and 45/209; Economic and Social Council resolutions 1989/6 and 1991/86; and ECE decisions 0 (45), P (45), A (46) and E (46).

32.65 The period 1992-1997 of the medium-term plan is expected to be dominated by conflicting developments in the field of energy. While for most of the time-span and for most market economies of the ECE region energy is expected to be in ample supply, longer-term problems of oil substitution, import dependence, rational use of energy and energy conservation, pollution and climate change would gain momentum and require the elaboration of "sustainable" energy policies. For the economies in transition, however, the period 1992-1997 is likely to be dominated by short-term problems of energy supply, nuclear and mine safety, emission control and the introduction of market-oriented energy policies and instruments.

32.66 These perspectives will shape energy cooperation within ECE during 1992-1997. Its structure should change in favour of issues such as sustainable energy strategies; assistance to economies in transition; energy efficiency; clean coal technologies; world coal and gas trade potentialities; energy security, interconnection of the East and West European gas, oil and electricity networks; management training; technical assistance and mine safety.

32.67 The objectives of the subprogramme are:

(a) To promote exchanges of views and experience on selected issues of common interest (including technology transfer and internationalization of environmental costs); to formulate general recommendations on issues such as the rational use of energy, including energy-efficient standards and labelling systems, emission control, new sources of energy, sustainable development, cooperative research of trade, development and dissemination of renewables, harmonization of efficiency standards, and incorporation of environmental costs in energy prices;

(b) To promote implementation of such specific projects as "Energy Efficiency 2000" and the interregional project "Global Energy Efficiency 21" based on the experience of "Energy Efficiency 2000";

(c) To ensure that the programme of cooperation in the energy sector responds to changing policy needs and opportunities;

(d) To capitalize on complementarities and avoid duplication of activities by reviewing related activities of other entities of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations;

(e) To develop or update international classifications, statistics, balances, projections, databases and terminologies necessary for the implementation of the programme, and disseminate that information to ECE member States and other interested parties.

(b) Course of action of the secretariat

32.68 Apart from servicing the meetings and seminars approved by the Committee on Energy, the secretariat will keep abreast of energy development and related national policies; analyse trends and developments in the energy sector in the region, with particular emphasis on economies in transition, demand, efficiency, sustainability and environmental impact of energy use and energy security. The related findings and recommendations will be disseminated to the members of the Commission and published as appropriate.

SUBPROGRAMME 7. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

(a) Objectives

32.69 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolution 42/186 and ECE decisions O (45), P (45), A (46), B (46) and E (46).

32.70 Profound economic and technological changes have occurred in recent

years in the steel, chemical and engineering industries, as well as in automation, which will continue to affect these industrial sectors - possibly even at an accelerated rate - during the next decade. Problems related to the supply of raw materials, technological developments, quality requirements, energy constraints, protection of the environment, trade and competition will persist. The importance attached by Governments to making sustainable development the guiding principle in the interrelated objectives of economic growth, environmental protection and sound development within the region will have a significant impact on the way in which priorities are set in the study and solution of underlying problems affecting those industrial sectors. There is also a need for considerable restructuring of state-owned industrial enterprises in those industrial sectors so that they could operate effectively under market-economy conditions and become integrated within the global economy. There will be a need for further structural adjustments as a result of intensified cooperation among countries at the subregional level and the emergence of increased production capacities in the newly industrialized countries.

32.71 In the area of standardization and related activities, the current process of development and harmonization of standards and conformity assessment procedures in the region, especially with respect to regulated products, requires further attention. Its possible detraction from the policy of global acceptance of international standards and systems for conformity assessment can become a major non-tariff barrier to international trade.

32.72 The objectives of the subprogramme are:

(a) To facilitate cooperation in the ECE region in the industrial sectors pertaining to the steel, chemical and engineering industries and automation and the process of reform in those sectors in the economies in transition, and to provide a framework within which the member countries can exchange information and experience;

(b) To create conditions under which ECE members can develop a unified strategy for further diversification of the industry structure in order to enhance the economic and technological development in that sector in specific subregions;

(c) To promote international agreements and instruments on standardization policies and procedures in the region in order to ensure the conformity of the standardization process to global policies and trends in that field.

(b) Course of action of the secretariat

32.73 In line with those objectives, the ECE secretariat will undertake research and analysis of conditions and trends in the industrial sector of the region and will disseminate the findings among the members of ECE with a view to elaborating the future industrial development strategy in the region. In that context, the secretariat will prepare and publish (a) annual reviews on current developments and prospects, including international trade in the steel, chemical and engineering industries, as well as in automation; (b) biennial updates on steel scrap statistics; and (c) five-year periodic surveys of developments affecting the chemical industry and the engineering

industries and automation, with special attention to the environmental and energy aspects of the production process in steel, chemicals and engineering, and statistics for sectors of the engineering industry that are of commercial importance. Studies will be undertaken on steel product quality and maximum utilization of scrap; on the problems arising from the methods for the preparation of scrap as well as improvements that can be brought to all scrap that uses these methods; on market trends and international trade in the above-mentioned sectors; and on selected economic, technological, environmental and resource issues. Work on the elaboration and dissemination of relevant statistics will continue.

32.74 In the area of standardization and related activities, the harmonization of standards and technical regulations with a view to facilitating trade and transport within the region will receive particular attention. Recommendations aimed at the promotion of international agreements and other appropriate arrangements on the acceptance of certificates of conformity with standards and technical regulations will be adopted.

32.75 Seminars and study tours will be organized on selected issues of specific interest to countries of the region. In order to facilitate the process of reform in the economies in transition, the secretariat will also play an active role in the preparation of workshops, symposia and other similar informal forums, in particular to address transition issues.

SUBPROGRAMME 8. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

(a) Objectives

32.76 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolutions 44/14 and 44/236; Economic and Social Council resolution 1989/99; and ECE decisions O (45), P (45), A (46), B (46) and E (46).

32.77 Science and technology are recognized as being increasingly important factors in economic development. The processes whereby research and innovation take place and their impact on economic development, industrial infrastructure, productivity and investment patterns call for further analysis based on exchange of information and experience among national policy makers. The escalating costs of research and development and the increasingly limited availability of resources, coupled with the rapid pace and complexity of technological innovations, make it desirable for Governments to cooperate more closely in identifying new forms and directions of international scientific and technological cooperation, and in analysing and exchanging experience on emerging science and technology issues having a multidisciplinary character. So far, considerable differences exist among ECE countries with respect to the developments taking place in science and technology and in their respective systems of economic management, approaches to planning and business practices.

32.78 The objectives of the subprogramme are:

(a) To provide a forum for the exchange of experience between member Governments in the formulation and/or implementation of science and technology policy; the formulation of proposals aimed at the promotion of international cooperation in the field of science and technology policy; the improvement and coordination of the activities of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission in

the field of science and technology; and the coordination of the activities of the Commission with other international or intergovernmental organizations dealing with the problems of scientific and technological cooperation;

(b) To provide conditions and avenues for studying selected issues in science and technology, and to review changes in national science and technology policies and institutions.

(b) Course of action of the secretariat

32.79 In the light of those objectives, the ECE secretariat will:

(a) Review major developments and changes in national science and technology policies, priorities and institutions, including quadrennial reviews of changes in overall national science and technology policies, priorities and institutions;

(b) Maintain an inventory of existing safety guidelines in biotechnology;

(c) Disseminate information on selected issues in science and technology and assist the process of reform in the economies in transition, in particular by contributing to the preparation of periodic seminars, workshops, symposia and other similar informal forums.

SUBPROGRAMME 9. AGRICULTURE AND TIMBER

(a) Objectives

32.80 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolutions 42/186 and 44/212; Economic and Social Council resolution 1987/90; and ECE decisions O (45), P (45) and A (46).

32.81 With their increasing integration into the national economy, the agricultural and timber sectors, traditionally labour-intensive, are in constant need of adaptation so as to remain competitive with other sectors in attracting investment and other resources. The introduction of new technologies and the adjustment of existing ones are to be viewed against a complex background of internal and external impacts, interrelationships and consequences. The 1990s are likely to witness an intensification of the pace of change affecting agriculture and the forest products sector, which will arise from developments notably in Central and Eastern Europe, environmental protection, regional integration, international trade, social conditions and technology.

32.82 In that context, the Committee on Agriculture of ECE has adopted a programme of work for 1992-1996 based on the provisions and priorities set out in decision O (45) and on an understanding of cooperation and division of responsibilities in the field of food and agriculture between ECE and FAO. Likewise, the ECE Timber Committee has adopted its programme of work on the basis of decision O (45) for the same period, many elements of which are carried out jointly with FAO and some with ILO.

32.83 The objectives of the subprogramme are:

(a) In the field of agriculture: to assist member States of ECE, in particular countries in transition, by providing economic assessments of the agri-food sector, including farm management; reviewing agricultural commodity markets and international trade; identifying means for improving the relationship between agriculture, environmental protection and sustainable development; promoting international standards for perishable produce and other agricultural products to facilitate their trade and distribution; and developing statistics relating to food and agriculture;

(b) In the field of timber: to assist member States of ECE, in particular the countries in transition, by providing short-, medium- and long-term economic analysis of the forest and forest products sector, including international trade; assessing the sustainability of the forest resource and the threats from damaging agents, including air pollution and fire; the capacity of the forest sector to provide wood products and environmental and other services on a sustainable basis; and developing statistics relating to the forest and forest products sector.

(b) Course of action of the secretariat

32.84 In the light of those objectives, the secretariat will undertake research and provide analytical and other services to member Governments of ECE on the food, agricultural and timber sectors in respect of the following areas: environmental aspects and sustainable development, markets, standards, trade facilitation and statistics, as a basis for policy formulation and entrepreneurial decision-making. For timber, similar activities will be undertaken, with particular emphasis on the medium- and long-term aspects and the sustainability of the resource base of that sector.

32.85 In that context, the secretariat of the ECE will continue to assist:

(a) The Committee on Agriculture in studying ways and means of keeping abreast of the accelerating changes in the agriculture sector, notably the relationship between agriculture and the environment, and the economics of the agri-food sector and farm management;

(b) The Timber Committee in carrying out activities aimed at better conservation and protection of the forest environment and at the sustainable use of forest resources, and the goods and services they provide.

32.86 In line with those responsibilities, the secretariat will also play an active role in the preparation of symposia, workshops and other informal forums for the members of the Commission and continue to produce publications and disseminate information on agricultural and timber matters among the ECE members and other interested parties, including other intergovernmental and international organizations.

SUBPROGRAMME 10. HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

(a) Objectives

32.87 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolutions 42/186 and 44/173; and ECE decisions O (45), P (45) and A (46).

32.88 The components of human settlements, land-use, shelter, infrastructure, energy, water and services, should be planned and managed in a sustainable way. There is a need to improve housing conditions and areas, modernize existing buildings and revitalize urban centres and neighbourhoods throughout the region. Better links between planning for human settlements, environment and traffic planning should be established, including the introduction of new environmental principles to human settlements planning and policy. Human settlements should provide the framework for the conservation and recycling of non-renewable sources. Energy conservation in the construction and use of buildings will continue to be an important objective.

32.89 In countries in transition, continuation of reformulation of their housing, land-use and building policies and legislations to market approaches is required. Three aspects of housing provision are of special importance for those countries: financial arrangements, land management and promotional activity.

32.90 Social and demographic changes and the ageing of the population in most ECE countries will require further attention to develop appropriate housing, social and service policies and standards.

32.91 The objectives of the subprogramme are:

(a) To promote housing, land-use and building policies with a view to environmental and economic soundness and sustainable development of human settlements;

(b) To provide a forum for an extensive exchange of experience on human settlements problems, national objectives and policies, and to promote international statistics in the field;

(c) To assist countries in economic and social transition in the reformulation of their housing, land-use and building policies to market economy approaches.

(b) Course of action of the secretariat

32.92 In order to achieve those objectives, the ECE secretariat will analyse and distribute information on current trends and policies in human settlements fields, cooperate with country experts in the preparation of discussion papers and summary reports, and play an active role in the preparation of seminars and workshops. It will continue to service regular meetings of relevant bodies. It will cooperate with and consult other international organizations to avoid duplication of efforts. The secretariat will also continue to produce publications on selected topics of specific interest to the member countries, and will assist the Committee on Human Settlements in the formulation of regional policies and strategies in the field of human settlements.